



Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Seattle Department of Transportation

Grace Crunican, Director

July 26, 2004 (*revised*)

Re: SDOT response to *Magnolia Parking Study* recommendations

The *Magnolia Parking Study*, arranged by the Magnolia community and completed in February 2003 by Transportation Solutions, Inc., lists the strategies below on page 25 as solutions to the increasing parking demand in the Magnolia Village. The *Making the Parking System Work* program was engaged to provide a response to the recommendations in the Study, including suggestions for engaging the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) in implementing recommendations where appropriate.

In general as a neighborhood develops and is more attractive to businesses, residents, developers, and visitors/shoppers, the demand for parking increases. At the same time, the supply either remains the same or often decreases as parcels that were cost effective as surface parking lots become more valuable to develop. The equation of increasing parking demand coupled with the same or decreasing parking supply becomes more intense as the neighborhood or business district grows. Employing strategies that may be new to, or not previously needed by, the community may be necessary.

Magnolia Parking Study recommendations

- A) Reduce peak period parking time limits on W McGraw b/t 32nd Ave W and 34th Ave W.
- B) Work with Village businesses located in the core to provide employee passes to park in the public off-street lot at 32nd Ave W and Clise PL W.
- C) Provide angle parking on the west side of 33rd Ave W b/t McGraw St and W Smith St.
- D) Provide angle parking on the east side of 34th Ave W, north of W Smith St.
- E) Provide angle parking on the north and south sides of W McGraw St b/t 32nd Ave W and 34th Ave W.
- F) Provide additional on-street stalls for disabled/senior citizens.
- G) Provide parking stalls for Flexcar users.
- H) Modify the intersections of W McGraw St at 32nd Ave W, 33rd Ave W, and 34th Ave W by installing pedestrian bulbs to enhance pedestrian user-friendliness and reduce vehicle speeds.
- I) As future developments are planned, developers should be required to provide parking supplies that meet the projected demands of the development in order to minimize spillover onto public parking supplies.



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SDOT comments on the *Magnolia Parking Study* recommendations:

A) Reduce peak period parking time limits on W McGraw b/t 32nd Ave W and 34th Ave W.

Comment: This recommendation seeks to reduce the on-street parking time limits during the times of peak on-street parking use during the day (such as 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.) in the core village area. This proposal would result in different on-street parking time limits in effect on some or all blocks in the commercial core during different times of the same day. This is not a practice SDOT supports, and instituting the arrangement as described would present serious, and probably insurmountable, difficulties for enforcement. The Study also does not describe the business community's perspective on the impacts of reducing the time limits and of having the time limits change during different times of the day in the core commercial area.

A related option would be to uniformly reduce the time limits for parking (such as from 2-hours to 1-hour) either on some or all blocks of the commercial area. SDOT generally requests that the business community demonstrate a reasonable internal agreement to this change before SDOT will partner with them in implementing such a request. If uniform changes to time limits for parking are desired, please contact Frank Nelson at frank.nelson@seattle.gov or 684-5379.

SDOT believes reliable duration and turnover data (e.g. how long a vehicle remains parked in a particular space, and how often different unique vehicles use the same space over a period of time) may be desirable to understand the parking environment in the Village commercial core, and for the community to be able weigh the advantages and disadvantages of some specific courses of action. The *Magnolia Parking Study* does not provide any turnover and duration data due to the data collection method used. Should the community want to arrange for this kind of data to be collected, SDOT is available to assist the community in describing the specific types of data commonly obtained and methods used to collect that data. Please contact Mike Morris-Lent at 684-5727 or mike.morrislent@seattle.gov for this assistance.

Additionally the *Magnolia Parking Study* does not address to what degree employees of area businesses occupy stalls all day or for significant portions of the day. Nor does the study address the current parking spillover, or potential spillover of implementing any of the recommendations, of customer and employee parking into the surrounding residential neighborhood. SDOT believes some kind of information on this activity is desirable in considering any proposed changes to on-street parking in the core commercial area.

B) Work with Village businesses located in the core to provide employee passes to park in the public off-street lot at 32nd Ave W and Clise PL W.

Comment: This strategy may be implemented at the discretion of the business community without SDOT assistance. For example, the public parking lot bounded by W Lynn St, Clise Pl W, and 32nd Ave W appears to have significant unused capacity despite the low rate charged, and this site may offer the potential for the business community to purchase monthly stalls for employee use.

SDOT suggests making use of the online guides to be found on the "Parking in Seattle" homepage at www.seattle.gov/transportation/parking. Go to the "Neighborhood and Business Tools" section and follow the links to "Community-Owned Facilities and Validation Programs." The Magnolia Village business community may wish to explore developing a multi-faceted Small Business Access Package similar to one created by Wallingford and U-District merchants (info may be found at www.cityofseattle.net/waytogo/businessdistricts.htm). Another resource is the "Guide to Parking Management" also found in the "Neighborhood and Business Tools" section.

Another option that may be worth exploration is for the business community to consider the feasibility of purchasing a lot to use for customer parking as the Village continues to develop. Several other Seattle neighborhood business communities have done so in the past (such as Ballard and the U-District). Additionally, the community's pursuit of lot-sharing arrangements suggested in the Study may, if successful, yield an increase to the existing parking supply.

C) Provide angle parking on the west side of 33rd Ave W b/t McGraw St and W Smith St.

D) Provide angle parking on the east side of 34th Ave W, north of W Smith St.

E) Provide angle parking on the north and south sides of W McGraw St b/t 32nd Ave W and 34th Ave W.

Comment: These recommendations call for the installation of angle parking on the blocks named as a way to increase the parking supply in the village commercial core. SDOT has reviewed the blocks listed in items "C" and "D" above, and has determined that those blocks are not candidates for installing angle parking either because they are too narrow or due to other traffic flow and/or safety considerations. Item "E" above could be eligible for installing angle parking. However SDOT inspection revealed that there might be little gain in number of on-street spaces if converted to angle parking. Another consideration in pursuing angle parking on W McGraw is the presence of trees, poles, and other street fixtures within three feet of the curb because angle parking allows for three feet of vehicle overhang. The presence of a large number of objects within three feet of the curb will limit where angle parking may be installed.

SDOT was responding to community requests to explore installing angle parking on W McGraw in 2002 but the community requested SDOT wait, perhaps due to the expected release of the *Magnolia Parking Study* in early 2003. The community also expressed interest in the angle parking being head-in, but back-in angle parking is the SDOT standard for safety reasons: it is much safer for drivers to re-enter traffic by entering it going forward, rather than backing into it.

Below are the general steps used when investigating the possibility of installing angle parking on a street or block, though each block is considered on a case-by-case basis. Please send requests for initial assessment of a particular block's or street's suitability for angle parking to Frank Nelson at frank.nelson@seattle.gov or 684-5379.

1. The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) will determine if a specific street or block is physically suitable for installing angle parking, taking into account factors such as street width, traffic and circulation patterns, and safety issues. Additionally issues such as whether the street or block currently has parking, and what type, are considered.
2. If SDOT determines that a specific street or block is a suitable candidate for installing angle parking, then the community conducts a petition process to demonstrate that at least 60% of the property owners on a specific block are supportive of installing angle parking. SDOT provides a petition to the community who then conducts the petitioning by contacting the adjacent property owners (SDOT can direct community members to appropriate websites with parcel owner information). Petitioning serves both to alert adjacent property owners of the proposed change, allows them to demonstrate their support (or lack thereof) for the change, and allows concerns and potential problems with the proposed changes to surface and be addressed. SDOT makes the final decision about changes in the right-of-way including whether or not to install angle parking.
3. If the petitioning is successful in acquiring support of 60% of adjacent property owners, then the petitions are turned in to SDOT for review. If no obstacle emerges to the installation of angle

parking, then typically SDOT approves the installation and schedules the work crews at the earliest opportunity.

4. After angle parking is installed, SDOT and the community monitor the area in the following months to determine the outcome of the change, and if necessary adjust the installation, or, if unforeseen problems emerge that are of sufficient scope and substance, the angle parking may be removed (although this is not common).

F) Provide additional on-street stalls for disabled/senior citizens.

Comment: This recommendation calls for the installation of signs in the commercial core restricting the adjacent stall to use by disabled and/or senior citizens. The City does not install Disabled Parking signage on blocks adjacent to commercial land uses, although the City does permit this in residential areas. Installing Accessible (Disabled) Parking signs will prohibit a stall from being used by all vehicles not bearing an Accessible (Disabled) Placard or license plate, which would reduce the available supply of on-street spaces for general use.

Currently any vehicle with an Accessible (Disabled) Placard or license plate may park for an unlimited amount of time in any regular on-street parking space including metered spaces and spaces in commercial areas (visit www.seattle.gov/transportation/parking/disabledparking.htm for more information on this WA State program). As of July 2004, the City is exploring the option granted by the State of enacting 4-hour time limits for those vehicles bearing Disabled Placards (but not including those vehicles bearing Disabled Plates).

No SDOT policy allows curb space to be restricted for use by only senior citizens. However, the strategic placement of a 3-minute passenger load zone has been successful in some instances of providing a reliable space for senior citizens to disembark close to their destination, after which the driver of the vehicle then moves the vehicle to an available parking space that may be further from the destination (load zones are specifically for loading or unloading and should not be used for parking). To explore the installation of passenger load zones, call Ken Wong at 684-5104 or e-mail to ken.wong@seattle.gov, or visit www.seattle.gov/transportation/parking/parkingload.htm to learn more about load zones.

G) Provide parking stalls for Flexcar users.

Comment: SDOT has begun permitting curb space to be used for car-sharing vehicles on a case-by-case basis. If a car-sharing company is interested in obtaining a space in the Magnolia Village, the company should contact Dave Allen at 733-9302 or dave.allen@seattle.gov. In some cases the community may need to demonstrate to a car-sharing company that there is sufficient demand for these services in order to justify the placement of a vehicle in their neighborhood. Stalls designated for car-sharing vehicles are reserved for that purpose 24-hours per day, and will decrease the supply of on-street parking.

H) Modify the intersections of W McGraw St at 32nd Ave W, 33rd Ave W, and 34th Ave W by installing pedestrian bulbs to enhance pedestrian user-friendliness and reduce vehicle speeds.

Comment: Curb bulbs, also known as curb extensions, can increase driver visibility of pedestrians and shortens the pedestrian crossing distance. On-street parking must be in place on a block for curb bulbs to be possible. An evaluation of a specific site is necessary to determine feasibility. SDOT does not currently have funding for projects such as this. Should the neighborhood identify funding for these curb bulbs, the Department would be glad to evaluate specific locations. Please contact Pete Lagerwey at (206) 684-5108 or e-mail to pete.lagerwey@seattle.gov.

I) As future developments are planned, developers should be required to provide parking supplies that meet the projected demands of the development in order to minimize spillover onto public parking supplies.

The City's current parking policies for new developments are generally designed to encourage transit use, reduce development costs, and allow some parking spillover into surrounding areas. They are not designed to accommodate peak parking demand as is suggested by the recommendation because of the negative impact on land use, transportation and development opportunities. In fact, current parking requirements for many land uses are set higher than necessary.

With these findings, the City is evaluating current parking requirements for business districts through the Neighborhood Business District Strategy. More information about this process can be found at www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Neighborhood_Business_District_Strategy/index.asp or by contacting Jory Phillips at 206-386-9761 or jory.phillips@seattle.gov.

The City's current parking requirements can be found in the Land Use Code section 23.54, available online at <http://clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us/~public/t23.htm>.